

of fentanyl in 2020 than there were people within the State. This means the Drug Enforcement Administration seized enough fentanyl to kill everyone in Iowa.

Our law enforcement officers are critical to the fight against illicit drugs.

Now, listen. In the last year or two, law enforcement has been subject to terrible abuse, but these brave men and women don't do just great things; they also do good—good for our country and good in protecting our people. The brave members of State and local law enforcement—you know, like the police, like the sheriffs, like the correctional officers, as well as our Federal officers—deserve honor and respect. They put their lives on the line to ensure that we are all safe.

When tragedy strikes, we feel the loss of our fiercest defenders. In fact, according to the FBI, the rate of officers killed in the line of duty is up. As of last month, 59 members of law enforcement were killed in 2021. At this point in 2020, the number was 39, and that was still an uptick from years prior. This trend is a grim reminder of the bravery, the courage, and the valor each law enforcement officer has when they go to work.

DEA Agent Mike Garbo was one of our most recent casualties in the fight against the illicit drug trade. He was conducting a routine check on an Amtrak train in Arizona when two drug traffickers ambushed him and his fellow DEA agents with gunfire, and of course Agent Garbo was killed.

Agent Garbo was a committed law enforcement person, committed to a career of public service generally and law enforcement specifically. He served as a police officer in Nashville for nearly 12 years before he joined the Drug Enforcement Administration. He served the DEA honorably for more than 16 years, combating drug traffickers all over the globe, from our southwest border all the way to Afghanistan.

This tragedy reminds us in Washington, here, that our work to stop the flow of illicit drugs and to combat drug-related crime isn't over. I support being tough on deadly drugs like fentanyl substances by pushing for permanently scheduling all fentanyl analogs, and I am leading a bipartisan effort to proactively control synthetic analogs and address the heightened threats of methamphetamine.

Being pro-active in the fight against illicit, deadly drugs is critical for multiple reasons.

First, we want to make sure it is harder for drug traffickers to bring drugs into our Nation and to fuel the addiction crisis, but we also need to make it harder for drug traffickers to feel emboldened in lawlessness and to kill law enforcement people like Mike Garbo.

It is time for us to stop sharing stories about tragedies, and, instead, we need to rewrite the story of our future

as a nation. I urge my colleagues to act for the betterment of all Americans and join me in the fight against the illicit drug trade, particularly the scheduling of fentanyl and its analogs.

Most importantly, we must all—and I do—thank Agent Garbo and his family for putting his life on the line to protect his fellow countrymen. His sacrifice is, sadly, much too common, but it doesn't make it any less powerful and tragic. We will continue to honor this man and those who follow in his footsteps as we fight the spread of illicit, deadly drugs.

#### PRIVATE DEBT COLLECTION PROGRAM

Madam President, now on another matter, I want to refer to the debate that is going on behind the scenes here as Democrats try to put together a bill that they would call the Build Back Better bill. I call it the Blue State Billionaire Bailout. It comes from that part that they are talking about increasing all of the IRS agents by a massive amount of people to supposedly bring in x number more dollars into the Federal Treasury. There is some debate about how much it will bring in.

But I want to talk about a program that hires more agents, pays for more agents, and brings in more money, and that is the Private Debt Collection Program.

Going back to what is being talked about here in the Senate behind closed doors in the Democratic Party to put this Blue State Billionaire Bailout bill together, I go to December 1, Washington Post, Secretary of Treasury Janet Yellen. The Post gave her two Pinocchios for claiming that the bloated Blue State Billionaire Bailout package is fully paid for, or, as she would say, the Build Back Better bill is fully paid for.

Much of the Post's column focuses on how much revenue Democrats' proposed increase in the IRS enforcement budget would generate. The White House and the Congressional Budget Office have offered wildly, wildly different estimates of what that proposal would do. The estimate provided by CBO—that is Congress's official scorekeeper—is hundreds of billions less than the number provided by the White House.

I am noting this disagreement to highlight an existing program that is bringing in additional revenue without Congress spending 1 dollar more. I am speaking about, as I previously said, the Private Debt Collection Program.

Recently, the IRS provided an update of this program's enforcement and performance for fiscal year 2021. It shows the program is thriving and bringing in more and more revenue on an annual basis.

Maybe I should give a personal comment on why this program is important to me, because I think I was chairman of the Finance Committee—I forget whether it was 2003 through 2006—during that period of time that we set this program up.

This update on the latest statistics shows that this program, the Private Debt Collection Program, resulted in net revenue to the Treasury of more than \$1 billion in fiscal year 2021. This is a real increase of around 129 percent over net revenue in fiscal year 2020 of around \$459 million. That 2020 increase was on top of a more than 100 percent increase in net revenue over the year 2019.

These numbers show that the longer the Private Debt Collection Program operates, the more it recovers to the Federal Treasury. The incredible numbers of fiscal year 2021 also reflect several months where the IRS did not provide new cases to the private debt collection company, and without cases being given to these private debt collectors, you aren't going to get more revenue.

In a previous speech, I said that I was going to hold the IRS Commissioner responsible to his promise to provide additional cases to the collection companies by September 27.

And, by the way, I also ought to make very clear that this Private Debt Collection program only goes after taxpayers that aren't paying and that the IRS has given up on collecting money from.

So Commissioner Rettig has kept his promise. I understand that additional collection cases were provided. I commend Commissioner Rettig for following through on his promise to me and for his continued support of this very worthwhile program.

The Private Debt Collection program also does more than just bring in revenue into the Treasury. It also pays for the IRS to hire special compliance personnel who collect unpaid debts that are owed to the government. Those amounts are reflected in the total fiscal year numbers that I gave earlier. I understand that the program was also so successful that the IRS can now hire with this additional revenue up to 400 more employees.

Right now, the Senate is wrangling over how much revenue might be collected if you increase the budget of the IRS and hire thousands of additional IRS personnel. So, meanwhile, as I have shown, we currently have a program that is already bringing in more money year over year, while paying for additional IRS personnel.

I appreciate Commissioner Rettig's support of this program, and look forward to reporting to my colleagues on his continued success.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Texas.

## BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we are nearing the halfway point of the 117th Congress, and it is time to look back and see what our Democratic colleagues now in the majority have accomplished.

Unfortunately, we have seen a lot of wasted valuable time and ignoring of critical tasks and failing to meet some of the most basic requirements of government. Our colleagues used the first few months of the year to ram through a partisan \$2 trillion spending bill, and then they wasted the summer on the majority leader's designed-to-fail agenda.

It wasn't about actually getting anything done. It was about messaging. And then they threw it in cruise control this fall, refusing to let the Senate vote on anything other than low-level nominees and, again, those messaging bills.

Well, unsurprisingly, this partisan approach to governing—despite the fact that we have an evenly divided Senate and perhaps an evenly divided government, this partisan approach, unsurprisingly, did not lead to any good results.

One of the biggest unforced errors in this tardiness so far has been the national defense authorization bill. Now, I happen to believe that providing for the common defense and supporting our men and women in the military, keeping the American people safe, protecting our freedoms is the most important work that we do here. And, indeed, that is reflected by the fact that the National Defense Authorization Act has been passed for 60 years, I believe it is—60 consecutive years.

Well, this is not a particularly controversial bill. In fact, it came out of the Armed Services Committee with an impressive 23-to-3 vote. You have to look long and hard to find any bill that passes the Senate that enjoys as much bipartisan support.

For some unknown reason, though, the Democratic leader refused to bring the Defense authorization bill to the floor. But then when he finally did, after it had been sitting around waiting for action for literally months, then he attached a controversial provision—a bill, the so-called Endless Frontiers Act, which had not been processed by the House, but in an attempt to force the House to take that bill.

Well, as it turned out, after broad bipartisan support for the Defense authorization bill, he couldn't get the votes here in the Senate to advance that bill, so he had to basically pull it down. Well, when you try to add something as big as the Endless Frontiers bill that did pass the Senate to a bipartisan Defense appropriations bill, that created a lot of problems.

So you can't sit on a bill for months and then at the last moment try to jam another bill onto it without at least giving people an opportunity for a robust debate and amendment process. And, as we know, during the time that

I have been here, and I am sure during the time that the Presiding Officer has been here, we have less and less of that robust debate and less and less of actually offering and voting on amendments on the Senate floor. It is very different from the time I came here, when it was commonplace.

So I am disappointed that it has taken the leader this long to bring the NDAA to the floor and that, so far, we have been thwarted in our attempt to get this bipartisan bill done. I hear rumors that, in fact, there may be a bill being preconferenced with the House. So my hope is we will get a chance to vote on this bill in the coming days.

Of course, as I indicated, this legislation sends critical support to our servicemembers and their families and ensures that our military bases in Texas, Connecticut, and elsewhere have the funding they need to support the missions they serve in around the world.

But it also provides the military the means to take stock in the global threat landscape. Since 9/11, we have been very focused on the terrorism threat. Unfortunately, at the same time, we have seen China and Russia continue to assert themselves more aggressively around the world. So now we are in the so-called "great powers competition" once again, and it is critical that we have this tool known as deterrence that only comes through strength.

Passing this bill and providing the resources and authorities needed for our military are essential to providing that strength, which will lead, hopefully, to deterrence and greater peace.

So the NDAA, as I said, is one of the most important assignments that we have, and there is simply no excuse for leaving this in the cleanup pile to be done between now and Christmas. But having said that, I hope we do get it done.

As I said, there are other past-due assignments—something as basic as funding the functions of the government through passing 12 separate appropriations bills that go through a committee process and are open to amendment in the committee.

Congress's deadline to pass the funding bills doesn't pop up out of nowhere. It hits the same day every year. Back in September, when the Senate should have passed a group of those appropriation bills to fund the government for the next fiscal year, our colleagues on the other side, led by the Democratic leader, kicked the can down the road for 2 months. Rather than use that time to play catch-up and pass those annual appropriations bills, they simply lollygagged.

The funding deadline came last week, and what happened?

Well, there was another continuing resolution. They kicked the can down the road yet once again.

This year, our colleagues have found the time to vote on partisan, dead-on-arrival messaging bills, but they have yet to bring a single appropriations bill

to the floor for a vote. We will see if that changes before February, when the current continuing resolution runs out.

Then there is another assignment that our colleagues have ignored for months, and that is the debt ceiling. While they are more than happy to spend money like they did at the first part of this year—another \$2 trillion—and add to the national debt and plan to spend at least another—anywhere from probably close to \$4.5 trillion additional more money on the Build Back Better program—I know it has been advertised as \$1.7 trillion, but outside entities like the Wharton business school at the University of Pennsylvania have said that if you ignore the stops and starts that are set up in the bill as gimmicks that make it scoreless and if you actually extend the bill for the full 10-year budget window, it really is spending closer to \$4.8 trillion.

We are trying to get the Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Committee on Taxation to give us a realistic score. But if you see this \$2 trillion spent at the beginning of the year with another anticipated potential up to 4.5, 4.8, \$5 trillion, you can see why raising the debt limit is so critical. The Treasury Secretary said that we will hit the debt limit by December 15, just a week from tomorrow.

Again, this crisis did not just pop up out of nowhere. Since July, the Republican leader has told our friends across the aisle that they need to raise the debt ceiling on their own.

Some have asked: Why do we insist that Democrats raise the debt ceiling on their own when ordinarily this is a bipartisan effort?

Well, part of this is just a necessary political accountability. If our colleagues are going to spend trillions of dollars in borrowed money and add to the debt ceiling, at some point there has to be some transparency and electoral accountability.

I am told now that Senator SCHUMER and Senator MCCONNELL have agreed on a process that will allow our Democratic colleagues to fulfill their responsibilities to raise the debt ceiling on their own and to suffer the accountability that goes along with it.

All along there was a clear roadmap that could have avoided this confusion if our colleagues had simply used the budget reconciliation process. Debt ceilings are routinely raised using the reconciliation process. There is no problem with the Byrd bath or any other concerns. It is something that is written into the Budget Act of 1974 that they could have done on their own earlier, but by delaying here to the last minute, when Secretary Yellen says we are going to hit the debt ceiling here by the 15th of December, they have created another crisis—again, of their own making.

The reason our colleagues have essentially failed at the fundamentals of governing over this last year is that they have been distracted by their own